

House Bars Pike Panel CIA Report

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The House voted overwhelmingly yesterday to prohibit immediate public release of the controversial 338-page House intelligence committee report which describes secret Central Intelligence Agency operations.

The 246-to-124 vote was a major victory for President Ford and just-departing CIA Director William E. Colby, who had argued strongly against its public release even though much of its contents has already been leaked to the press.

Whether the document is ever made public without further deletions being made is still in doubt.

The House action stipulates that public release must await certification from the President that disclosure would not harm the national interest. During the debate Rep. John B. Anderson (R-Ill.) said that once members have read the report they can have it made public by a simple majority vote.

But, after the vote, Committee Chairman Otis G. Pike (D-N.Y.) said he has no immediate plans to file the report and thus he would prevent it from being distributed to House members as a classified document.

He said he plans to let his committee vote next week either to kill the report or to agree to let the President make further deletions and then publish. He said he will vote to kill the report.

The White House had claimed that publication of the report with still classified information would violate procedures agreed to last October.

At that time, in a meeting with President Ford, Pike and senior Republican Rep. Robert McClory (Ill.) agreed to withhold public release of any classified information if the President certified that its disclosure would be harmful.

Pike, in yesterday's debate, said his agreement "did not apply to our final report. . . I would not have agreed to it." He argued that this would have amounted to allowing the CIA to "censor the report."

McClory, however, declared that the agreement, and what he considered its potential violation, put the honor of the

House in question.

Rep. Dale Milford (D-Tex.), a member of the intelligence committee, said: "The issue is can nine members of this House release information unilaterally" over the objections of the President. The committee voted 9-to-4 last week to approve and release the report.

Milford argued that every one of the deletions sought by the administration could be made and "it would not change a single thing in the report. What's in dispute are

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technicalities that neither the committee nor its staff understood but our adversaries would consider a virtual bonanza."

Pike, on the other hand, argued that the report "is not giving away any dangerous secrets" but admitted "there are classified facts that will be embarrassing."

The one Republican on the intelligence committee who voted to release the report, Rep. James P. Johnson of Colorado said that the report illustrates "despicable, detestable acts . . . and those responsible don't want their activities exposed."

Rep. Wayne Hays (D-Ohio), referring to the publication of many details from the report in the press, said during the debate: "Reading the report may be the biggest nonevent since Brigitte Bardot, after four husbands and many lovers, announced she was not a virgin."

In a statement last night, Mr. Ford said he was "pleased" that the House "has taken proper and responsible action to safeguard classified foreign intelligence information. This action indicates that a large majority of House members shares my concern that our legitimate classified national security information be denied to our enemies and potential enemies."

Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.), noting that copies of the draft report had been distributed to federal agencies for comment, said she would seek public release of the report under the Freedom of Information Act.

Behind the debate over the committee report is the issue for both the President and the Congress of who will have final say on the release of classified information.

Administration spokesmen argued that the Pike committee received secret intelligence material with the understanding that it would not be publicly disclosed if the President determined that publication would harm the national interest. The committee's draft report was to be released without following that procedure.

According to committee and administration sources, the draft report was sent to the

CIA on the afternoon of Jan. 19, so that it could be reviewed for publication.

The next day, copies were made and distributed by CIA to the State and Defense departments and the National Security Council. Administration officials were angered by the fact that some material from the report was already in newspapers the morning they received their copies.

On Jan. 21, the committee received combined requests for some 250 deletions on the grounds of national security. The next day, the committee staff and administration officials reached agreement to delete about 70 of these.

Last Friday, the committee voted to overrule the administration's objections in some 150 instances and at that point a revised draft was compiled for members and the administration and prepared for public release.

According to the informed sources, some 70 per cent of the outstanding administration objections relate to information involving CIA operations in Angola, U.S. intelligence submarines which operated in Russian waters, past military aid to Kurdish rebels in Iraq and funds

provided to Italian political parties and candidates. In the case of the Kurdish and Italian material, the draft report does not mention the name of the countries but, CIA officials believe they are readily identifiable.

Committee members and staff who argued for publication said that most of the material objected to has already appeared in print. CIA officials countered that there is a difference in credibility between a news story and material in an official publication from the House of Representatives.

In the Senate, intelligence committee chairman Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) introduced legislation on behalf of himself and seven committee colleagues to create a new permanent committee on intelligence.